

*Testimony in **SUPPORT of H.B. 5469: An Act Concerning Bear Hunting***

Dear Co-Chair Doyle, Co-Chair Kissel, Co-Chair Tong, Vice Chair Winfield, Vice Chair McLachlan, Vice Chair Stafstrom, Ranking Member Rebimbas, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee:

The recent tragic poaching of two Wilton bears highlights the cruelty of trophy hunting. This was especially disturbing to me because I am a wildlife rehabilitator, fighting to help CT animals.

Connecticut's small bear population needs protection. Over the years, the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection has made no effort to increase poaching penalties, keeping them unacceptably weak - currently, poaching is only a Class C misdemeanor. This bill is a step in the right direction.

DEEP has also been aggressively pursuing a bear trophy hunting agenda, which I vigorously oppose!

Thank you for your consideration.

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